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ABSTRACT

An informal survey of Hawaiian school teachers and administrators revealed a considerable variance among communities in the type of problems mentioned. A model was formulated to specify the characteristics of the communities in the hope of discovering a basis for allocating future program resources. The model consists of two dimensions: density of Hawaiian population (which includes both the number and relative visibility of the Hawaiian population in a given community) and degree of urbanization. Communities characterized by high density-high urbanization are expected to have a severe degree of all problem elements: motivational, academic, and social/behavioral. High density-low urbanization areas are expected to have problems primarily academic and/or motivational. Low denity-low urbanization problems will be primarily motivational, while low density-high urbanization problems will be primarily academic only. Research to test the model is proposed. [Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document.] (JM)

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PREDICTING SCHOOL PROBLEMS OF THE HAWAIIAN MINORITY[1]

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The educational problems of Hawaiian youth[2] have been amply documented (Gallimore and Howard, 1968). The range includes the forms of academic failure, motivation problems, and personal disjunctions which plague many young Americans, particularly those with a discriminable racial and cultural heritage. It has been generally assumed that the pattern of difficulties of young Hawaiians in the schools was invariant from one community to another. This assumption was confirmed at least for a single Hawaiian community which was the subject of an intensive five-year investigation. In that community, all the above manifestations of educational problems were present. However, subsequent to the completion of the five-year project, a recent informal state-wide survey suggested the assumption of invariant problem distribution to be quite misleading. The survey suggested that generalizing in the area of educational problem distribution from the results of the single community study to the State was questionable at best. This finding takes on considerable importance in view of the fact that the survey results bear directly upon public policy issues. If academic, motivational, and behavior problems tend to occur simultaneously within Hawaiian communities, then allocation of State resources for remedial and preventive programs can be made on a relatively simple basis. If the distribution is variable as the recent survey suggests, then allocation of public funds would need to be made on a prescriptive, rather than a general basis. The purpose of the proposed research is to test the validity of a model designed to separate the various Hawaiian communities along two dimensions which are predictive of the kind of educational problems which they suffer.

The informal survey consisted of visits to schools on all the major islands and discussions with school administrators and teachers concerned with the education of Hawaiian youth. The selection of areas and individuals during the informal survey was designed to be representative, not exhaustive. The survey confirmed the general conclusions reached during the intensive study in the previously mentioned five-year research: Hawaiian children do indeed have serious problems in the public schools, and the public education system has problems with them. But the survey also indicated that the kinds of difficulty, their distribution and, therefore, their potential solution are more complex than is generally supposed.

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In some communities, the educators described the Hawaiian child only as academically retarded, attributing the problem to perplexing, but not objectionable cultural values--for example, one administrator commented approvingly on the Hawaiian life style in spite of the limitations it may impose for operating in the larger society. In contrast, others saw not the clash of cultures operating against the chances of academic success for Hawaiians, but rather a complex of Hawaiian "deficiencies." Improper child care and training by Hawaiian parents were seen as resulting in inadequate

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[1] Paper read at Annual Meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Los Angeles, 1970.

[2] Youngsters of Polynesian Hawaiian ancestry--members of the Hawaiian ethnic group.

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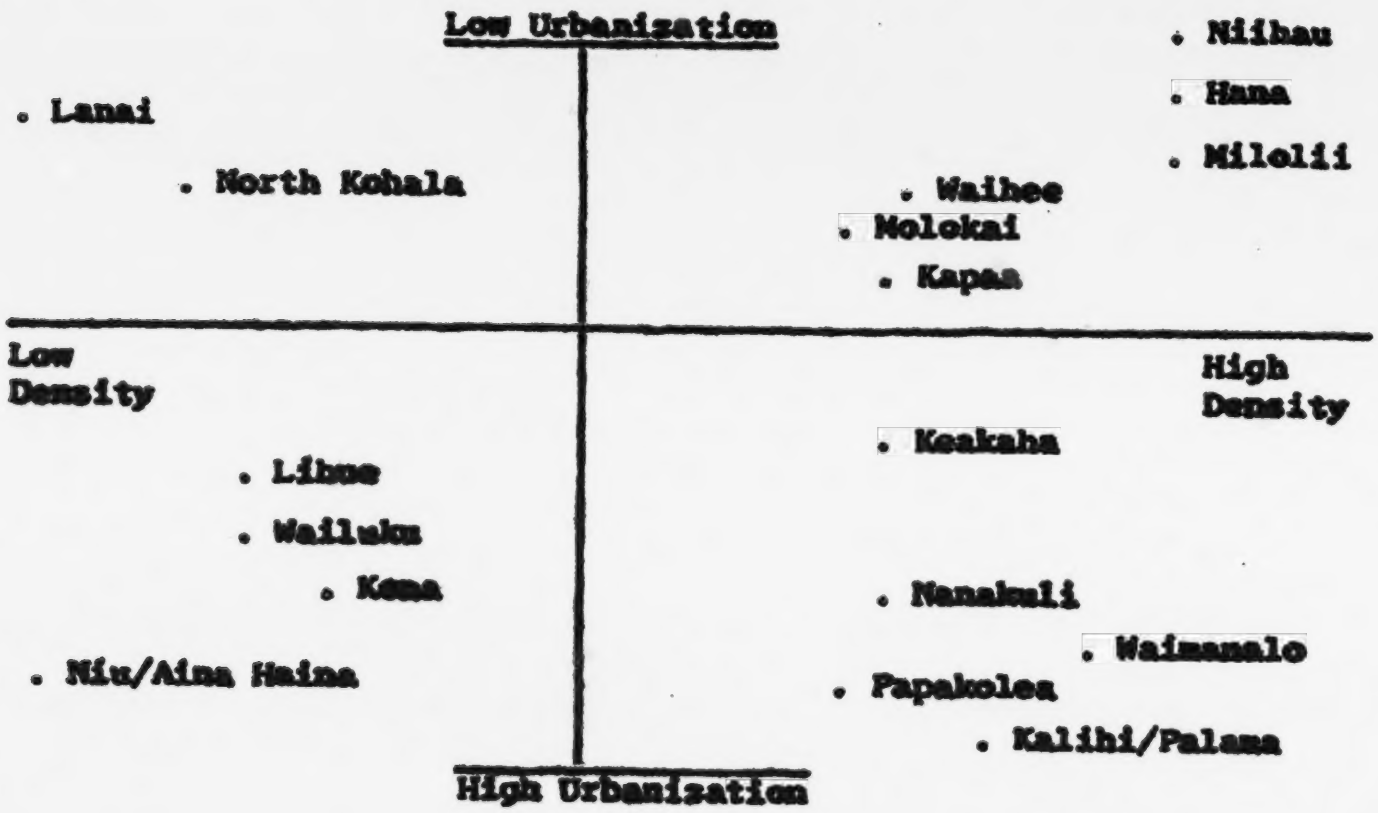
and immature personalities incapable of appropriate behavior or intellectual growth. All of these alleged difficulties were presumably compounded by what one educator termed "false values."

Thus it was evident that the assumptions made during the course of the concentrated work in a single community were invalid. In some communities educators felt that Hawaiian youngsters had only academic problems; in other communities, in addition to academic difficulties motivational and behavioral problems were also perceived. In summary, the distribution of the problems seemed quite varied from community to community. These variations would appear to have obvious programmatic implications; program inputs would need adjustment both in terms of the nature and severity of the problems.

We have used the results of the survey to construct a conceptual model. The principal burden of the model is articulation of the various problem clusters in an effort to clarify variation in major programmatic needs. The model consists of two dimensions: density of Hawaiian population and degree of urbanization. For presentational purposes, we will discuss the four possible combinations, each representing a hypothesized problem complex.

We mean by population density, not only the number of Hawaiians in residence, but also what can be described as their relative visibility; that is, the extent to which the Hawaiian population of a given area stands out from other groups. Degree of urbanization includes a number of factors: economic and employment characteristics (e.g., do the parents work at jobs that are not congruent with Hawaiian values?); amount of contact with social forces hostile to Hawaiian values and style of life; exposure to implicit or explicit and uncomplimentary comparisons with other groups; geographic location vis-a-vis metropolitan/urban centers. Figure 1 presents the two dimensions and the communities which we hypothesized to fall in each of the four quadrants.

FIGURE 1



For each of the four quadrants, we have predicted the following pattern of problems:

	*Problem Type		
	Motivational	Academic	Social/Behavioral
High Density--High Urbanization	yes!	yes!	yes!
High Density--Low Urbanization	yes!	yes!	
Low Density--High Urbanization	yes!	yes?	
Low Density--Low Urbanization	yes(?)	yes(?)	

*The distinction between motivational and academic problems may at first blush appear unusual. By way of clarification, we have used this split to reflect what the educators told us. That is, in some communities, Hawaiians are reportedly capable of doing their work (no academic retardation) but are not so motivated.

In order to provide a rationale for these predictions, we have summarized our survey findings for each of the four quadrants.

1. High Density--High Urbanization. Quadrant 4 is predicted to include all of the areas which have the most severe educational problems. And since urbanization is a principal defining feature of this cluster, it is not surprising that all the communities included are located in or near the two largest metropolitan areas in the State--Honolulu and Hilo. In part, the difficulties of Hawaiian youngsters in these areas are a function of visibility, both absolute and relative, but it is more than mere artifact. It is in these areas where the greatest cultural dislocation and home-community-school disjunctions appear to be present. The consequences are similar to the now familiar problems of the ghetto and the suburban enclave. Perhaps the most significant element in this situation is the gulf, and what it reflects, between the students and educators. The latter live in different areas from their students, in a style that simultaneously imposes a harsh standard of comparison and continuing evidence of status differences. The psychological distance, in terms of values, aspirations and expectations, makes interaction and communication difficult at best. In terms of our model, all problem elements are expected to be present in severe degree: motivational, academic, and social/behavioral.

2. High Density--Low Urbanization. Quadrant 2 includes areas which are less uniform principally because some are apparently in the early stages of urbanization, while others face the problem only in the remote future. This difference appears to alter the degree to which local educators perceive Hawaiians to be a major problem. As the community begins to change from a rural, semi-isolated state in response to changing economic conditions, the perceived disadvantages of the Hawaiian life style become a source of greater concern to educators. Where in the past the disinterest of Hawaiian pupils in academic matters represented only a failure to achieve the ideal, in the present educators begin to see underachievement as the father of personal and social tragedy and frustration. Consequently, educators no longer regard scholastic disinterest as concommitant with a culturally-linked life style which is congenially related to a placid, rural environment--rather under-achievement is interpreted as rejection of society, evidence of disorder, dissolution and deficiency; all of which are attributed to the culture of the child.

Problems in Quadrant 2 conditions are expected to be perceived as primarily academic and/or motivational in nature. Forces in the community are more likely than in Quadrant 4 to be neutral if not supportive in

response to program inputs--certainly they are unlikely to work at cross-purposes. The isolation that reduces the influence of urban forces increases the difficulties of matching need and resources. Many of the areas are geographically and/or temporally remote, yielding staff retention problems, access difficulties, long bus trips for small children, etc.

3. Low Density--High Urbanization. In general educators interviewed in these areas made no distinctions along ethnic lines and did not regard Hawaiian life style as causally linked to academic failure. Although, with persistence, it was possible to get the educaters to concede that Hawaiian youngsters are overrepresented in the underachievement--low motivation category--it is clear that they do not characteristically order their problems along ethnic lines. For example, one administrator insisted that we regard as coincidental the tendency for Hawaiian children to be in the low ability sections of his school. And even if it was for some cultural reason which, he emphasized, it was not, it was because "we have not offered them the appropriate curriculum."

Overall, when Hawaiians are in the minority their problems are minimized, even when they are objectively present. And their culture is positively regarded, often romanticized. It is apparently a matter of visibility. In this Quadrant, the problems are therefore perceived to be primarily academic.

4. Low Density--Low Urbanization. We made no visits to schools in this Quadrant. However, we predict that Hawaiian children in these areas will be principally viewed as a minor problem, involving primarily motivational issues.

To summarize, we predict that the three types of problems--motivational, academic, social/behavioral--will occur in patterns and in the communities predicted by our two-dimensional model.